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The moonbeam, parting from its misty shroud,
 Came down upon the scene—'twas like the light
 Of pity shed from some compassionate eye.
 O'er the crushed solitary it diffused
 A mantle pale ; and as the chieftain leaned
 Against his shrivelled door-post—mutely leaned,
 He seemed a spirit, come to fill the scene
 With fearfulness. * * * * *

He sate him down to weep—
 Oh, not to weep—such grief, it will not weep :
 He sat him down, and idly plucked the weeds
 And the rank grass from out the mouldering sod.
 His gaze is vacant—often wildly fixed
 On nothingness ; and yet his soul within
 Those glazing orbs its fearful revels held.
 Slowly he spoke ; and muttered words came forth,
 Like groans from out a tomb : a pallid ray
 Played round his ashen lips, which seemed to mock
 The vestal moonshine softly shed around.
 Despair and grief, allied to madness, sway'd him ;
 And he looked suddenly round, to scan
 If in the whole wide world an object shone,
 That might arrest his thoughts : it seems he found
 None—for his head, it lapsed upon his breast,
 Like his own forest-tree, when thunder-cleft.
 He groaned—a low, deep, bitter groan—
 And wildly folding round his trembling limbs
 His soiled garment, sank upon the earth,
 As if by death-stroke bowed.

R. G. M.

PERSONAL SKETCH—MR. SERGEANT WILDE.

The circumstances under which this gentleman has risen to eminence are somewhat singular. For twelve years he followed the profession of an attorney, with ability and success ; and having abandoned that pursuit and embraced the more dignified occupation of a barrister, with unheard-of rapidity he acquired large practice and extensive reputation. A natural reflection suggests itself as to the remarkableness of Sergeant Wilde's advancement, commencing, as he did, the study of his profession at the wrong end ; it may well be thought that the mind which is familiarised with technical quibbles, and practical details, can at best but arrive at craftiness and subtilty, and must remain for ever incapable of embracing wide truths, or comprehending grand and fundamental principles. Undeniable as this may be, as a general proposition, yet experience disproves its universal application by many brilliant examples. Men's employments in life are often misconceived. Some descend to the grave blessed with extraordinary, although undiscovered, talents ; the peculiar genius of others is not unfrequently perverted and misapplied ; still, when finally directed in its proper channel, bursting from the trammels of a narrow education, and shaking off the prejudices which evil habits had engendered, it shines forth with unexampled splendour, seeming to have borrowed activity and lustre from unnatural subjection. How powerfully is this exemplified in the legal profession ! Lord Hardwicke, the most celebrated judge that ever adorned the English bench, commenced his career as apprentice to an attorney, without having received an University or learned education, for the want of which (so

fatal to less gifted men) his uncommon powers of intellect and application made ample atonement; and it is a curious circumstance, that in the attorney's office, to whom this great man was articled, there were, at the same time, Jocelyn, afterwards Lord Chancellor of Ireland, Parker, who became Chief Baron of the Exchequer, and Strange, who died Master of the Rolls; and in later times we find Romilly and Redesdale, from the office of a six clerks, the former surpassing his rivals by the depth and soundness of his learning—enlightening senates by his eloquence and wisdom, and spurred into the noblest actions by a spirit of philanthropy as pure as it was unbounded; the latter, as an equity judge, pre-eminent for his wonderful research, the accuracy and impartiality of his judgment, the acumen and comprehensiveness of his decisions.

The subject of this sketch, although he commenced his career in somewhat a similar manner, is infinitely below these eminent individuals, as well in natural endowments as in moral worth. I am disposed to believe that Mr. Wilde has reached his highest elevation, and that whatever may be his hopes, as plain Sergeant-at-law he is destined to remain, and justly, for the reasons which I shall subsequently urge. If the excellent intentions of that worthy knight, Sir James Scarlett, could have been fully carried into effect, such persons as Sugden and Wilde would find a difficulty of working their way into the profession, without submitting to the delightful drudgery of learning Greek grammar and exercises, and of enduring a searching examination from Messrs. Alderson and Richards; for Sir James, smitten with love of classical acquirements, prevailed on the benchers of the Inner Temple to enact, that all students who wished to enter that ancient institution, should, if not provided with a University degree, be prepared to translate some portion of Greek, and moreover a little Latin. The wisdom of this admirable arrangement becomes apparent when we consider, that the other Inns of Court refused to adopt so judicious a criterion whereby to test the intellectual qualifications and moral fitness of the young aspirants to forensic fame. Sergeant Wilde was a member of a firm of solicitors who enjoyed large business, together with a very doubtful reputation; they were, and are, although, I firmly believe, at present, on insufficient grounds, regarded as sharp practitioners. Their connections being extensive, and their influence considerable, the Sergeant deemed it advisable, consigning his clients to the watchful care of his excellent brother, to become a barrister, and attach himself to the Court of Common Pleas, which he accordingly did. He had unusual facilities for the immediate acquisition of business, being well known to the attornies, and of a vigorous and energetic character, ready to push forward his interests on every opportunity. I have heard, and doubt not the truth of the report, that the first year of his practice Mr. Sergeant Wilde cleared £2,000. Persons unacquainted with the actual working of the system, may preach as they please concerning the certain success which awaits at the bar splendid talents and unwearied application. It is possible, perhaps probable, that after the lapse of many years, they may earn for their possessor emolument and distinction; and it is also very possible they may for ever remain buried in obscurity, for such has been the mournful fate of not a few—a fate which may operate as a useful warning to those highly gifted young men, who, filled with lofty hopes, rush into the profession of the law, conceiving they are about to reap at once the rich reward of their talents and research. If they be not disgusted at the success of men of doubtful merit, let them be slow in hope, and moderate in their expectations, convinced of this important truth, that if they had the learning of Coke

with the eloquence of Curran, they will be left behind in the race by individuals, who, without half the talent of Sergeant Wilde, have, like him, the cordial wishes and zealous support of that most influential body of persons, the attorneys. Mr. Wilde soon became distinguished in the Common Pleas, in which Court there is a shameful monopoly preserved in England, no less unfair to the young barrister, than injurious to the interests of the public. The assumption of the dignity of Sergeant is rather a dangerous step for some men, for it incapacitates them from acting as juniors; thenceforward they must appear as leaders only. Thus it happened with Sergeant Goulburn; while behind the bar he enjoyed considerable practice, but now he scarcely holds a brief. As a working second counsel, Mr. Wilde would have been regarded as an indifferent sort of person, for he is as much inferior in point of practical information and knowledge of case-law to Chitty or Platt, the *old* established juniors, as he is above them in the showy qualifications of the advocate.

In term time, accordingly, when sober argument and temperate logic are required, together with learning and tact, Mr. Sergeant Wilde displays no peculiar or uncommon excellence: he is, on the contrary, too bold, loud, confident and impetuous, for quiet and sober discussion; and moreover, he is not deeply read in his profession, as many of the reported cases in Bingham but too amply testify. This is not in the least degree surprising: the wonder is, how an individual who never studied, or had time to study, having suddenly jumped into great business, has been able to keep his ground among his legal brethren, many of whom have devoted their lives to the attainment of professional knowledge. The Sergeant, therefore, deserves high praise—he gets through his arguments as well as others; and the stranger who may happen to stroll into Westminster Hall, during term, and turn into the Common Pleas, to get a peep at the celebrated Sergeant Wilde, must not be offended at beholding a sturdy, loud-spoken lawyer, whose voice and manner present but few indications of the scholar or the gentleman.

The sittings at Nisi Prius are the scenes of his triumph. In this department of his professional practice, he is without a rival in the Common Pleas: he holds a brief in every cause, and from ten in the morning till seven in the evening, with untiring energy, dashes through assaults, crim. cons. trespasses, slanders, and seductions: he is alike at home in every case, and confident of success. It is in truth surprising to behold the indefatigable Sergeant, state his case, examine, and cross-examine every witness—then speak to evidence; and the next moment commence the same task over again, and so throughout the entire day without cessation, preserving the same tone, voice, spirit, and eloquence, down to the very last. Nothing can subdue or dismay this matchless advocate; he grapples so forcibly with every case, and tugs so hard against his opponent, that resistance becomes almost fruitless. Often, after watching the progress of a cause, have I sat till seven of a summer's evening, to hear the Sergeant speak to evidence, and never had I reason to regret it—never have I been disappointed—on the contrary, my admiration for his masterly abilities, has been, if possible, increased; surely, I would say, this man must be wearied with exertion! can he find strength for a fresh struggle? Soon, however, “like a strong man refreshed with sleep,” would he spring up, to deal out his closing blow, seeming to have reserved all his vigour for the last exertion, that he might give it with powerful effect. He assails his “learned friend,” brother Taddy, perhaps, with merciless force, overwhelming him with a burst of the boldest eloquence; then he lays hold of the evidence for the

defendant, and rends it to atoms, detecting little flaws, which had escaped every other eye—exaggerating the most natural slip into a scandalous prevarication, and inveighing against monstrous inconsistencies, where there was scarcely a discrepancy. Having annihilated the “flimsy case” of his adversary, he next shows up his own evidence in the most favourable light—glosses over whatever cannot endure investigation—drives every lurking suspicion out of the mind of the jurors—takes their understandings by storm—compels them to believe that all is right and honest, then winds up with an impassioned peroration upon his client’s wrongs and sufferings; in the course of which, the words “honour,” “justice,” “integrity of jurors,” “rights of Englishmen,” predominate; and lastly, flinging at the jury, by this time well stirred up, two or three of the most striking facts of his case, he demands, in a tone of triumphant eloquence, their unhesitating verdict; which verdict, notwithstanding the sapient directions of the judge, the jury, with such a speech ringing in their ears, but too often returns as the advocate bids them.

The Sergeant is then released—the business of the day is over, but the business of the night has yet to come; there are the same number of causes to be tried the next day—the same number of speeches to be made, and consequently the same number of briefs to be read. Accordingly, after swallowing a hasty meal, the learned Serjeant will be found at his chambers, King’s Bench Walk, attending consultations, and wading through masses of papers, till an hour or two past midnight, after which he may divert himself till half-past nine in the morning, when he must be in Westminster Hall, to begin afresh his squabbles with “brothers Storks and Spankie.” Frequently he spends an hour or two in chambers, before breakfast, just by way of a refresher. Thus is he employed, till the causes at *Nisi Prius*, at London and Westminster, which generally average in number, five hundred, are disposed of, and then he goes circuit for the remainder of the *vacation*.

It is pretty evident, to bear this never ending toil, his bodily strength must be commensurate with his mental energies; and this is exactly the case: the Serjeant is not one of your tall, pale, genteel looking men, who behave with propriety, and say uncommonly nice things; no, he is compact, and well built, scarcely above the middle size, and stands firmly on his legs; his bronzed countenance betokens professional impudence: his face has nothing remarkable in it, save the nose, which being cocked up at the end, well betokens the invaluable effrontery of the proprietor. His “iron voice,” is the weapon with which the doughty Serjeant overcomes every adversary; it is not harsh nor mellow—it is not soft, nor is it coarse; it is not grating, nor does it fall gently upon the ear—it never cracks, or even falters; but is as firm, loud, distinct, and bold, at midnight as at day break. When fumbling at the huge curtain which impedes your entrance into the Common Pleas, the sonorous accents of the Serjeant salute your ear. And when, after the lapse of many hours, you depart, the same thundering noise, as it were, cannonades you through the gloomy hall. His stentorian voice, coupled with his inflexible energy, renders him almost impregnable. His action corresponds with his delivery; it is unstudied, and appropriately impetuous; and he does not hesitate at enforcing his argument with an occasional whack upon the desk, to the evident discomfort of poor brother Taddy. I firmly believe Wilde could talk down Daniel O’Connell, and beat down Mr. Wallace; and more need not be said, to convey a proper notion of his wonderful assurance.

In the merry days of the good Chief Justice Best, it was my constant

practice to hurry to the Common Pleas, like a true Irishman to enjoy a row. The Ex-Chief Justice was a hasty, cranky, old gentleman, and while he continued to preside in this court, was teased by two eternal tormentors, the gout and Sergeant Wilde; and between bodily pain and mental irritation he was frequently worked into a frenzy of passion. All would be tranquil, till the Sergeant began to cross-examine, when "brother Cross," objecting to a question, and "brother Wilde" insisting upon its legality, the skirmish would begin. The Sergeants and the Judge would fight it out manfully, for "the Chief" had great pluck—all would speak together, and of course Wilde's voice would drown all opposition; enraged with passion, "his Lordship would demand a hearing," assert the dignity of the bench, and administer a stiff rebuke to brother Wilde, who, nevertheless, would still persist; and if he was defeated, he would have the last word at all events. Sometimes before the opinion of the court was delivered, the wily Sergeant would extort an answer to the question in dispute—then, indeed, the choler of the Chief Justice would be raised—in the bitterness of his wrath exclaiming, that justice had been violated, and deploring "he had not done his duty to this woman" (the witness.) His Lordship was given to charging the jury against Wilde, and if he succeeded with the jury—for he made it quite a personal affair—he hobbled off the bench, chuckling with satisfaction that he had beaten his enemy and gained his verdict. Let me do justice to the merits of his Lordship—if he was a partisan, it was in the cause of justice, and there was nothing he so heartily detested as falsehood, trickery, or prevarication, which, whenever he could, he did not fail to punish. It was his favourite practice, when the jury had returned their verdict, virtually convicting the witness of perjury, to commit the witness to prison for *contempt of court*, accompanying the sentence with a suitable admonition, often not a little amusing.

One substantial cause of Sergeant Wilde's great success as an advocate in the Court of Common Pleas, is the weakness of his rivals—they may all of them be disposed of in a sentence. Brother Taddy is rather a sensible man, but cold and spiritless; Brother Cross is a *cross* fellow to come *across*; he is stubborn and will not be put down; his practice limited; Brother Andrews is an exceedingly decent sort of person, and never contradicts his betters; Brother Spankie is but so, so, sometimes useful in the defence of a crim. con.; Brother Storks a short plain man, singularly devoid of understanding, and provokingly and stupidly lequacious; Brother Jones a plain man; Brother Bompas—nothing; Brother Stephen an exquisite scholar, who has written the most beautiful book ever published on the science of pleading, who seems to have but little practice because he deserves it most. Of the present Chief Justice a word may be said; he has a most doleful and lugubrious aspect; however, he deserves the highest praise, for he is a model of diligence, patience, impartiality and learning.

When Scarlett is brought into the Common Pleas, then, indeed, Sergeant Wilde meets his match, and he knows it; for he sits as far from Sir James as possible, and regards him with evident apprehension. The ease, ingenuity, and softness of Sir James puts him out of his way; he is well aware it is not "Brother Storks" he has to deal with, for Scarlett will hook an admission from him before he knows where he is. Blustering is of no avail; if Wilde shouts ever so loud, Sir James proceeds in his usual tranquil manner, satisfies the judge, wheedles the jury, leads the witness, gains the verdict, with the tranquillity of the artful advocate, and I may add, with the composure of a gentleman.

No two persons in the world can be more diametrically opposed to each other, in every possible respect, than these distinguished advocates. And it is not a little entertaining, and perhaps instructive, to view in contrast and in conflict, Messrs. Wilde and Scarlett, who, by pursuing an exactly different method, have each arrived at the highest eminence in the most difficult of all professions. How various, and how opposite must be the feelings and emotions which affect the understandings of men, disturb and agitate their hearts, when they can be worked upon for the accomplishment of the same ends, by the exertion of talents so widely dissimilar. Perhaps the extremes may not be so far removed, as we are taught by our classical recollections of the two philosophers to believe, that the ludicrous and the affecting are closely allied.

It may be collected from what I have written, that in the oratory of Sergeant Wilde, there is little elegance or refinement, no very deep streams of thought, and little that is indicative of a polished taste—and such exactly is the case. Although a far more successful advocate than Brougham, and in the enjoyment of more beneficial practice, he has not the deep philosophy, the profound and original conceptions, or the mighty grasp of intellect of that extraordinary man—nor can Sergeant Wilde lay claim to the mathematical precision of Mr. Pollock—the classical and sparkling thoughts, the bright, although unequal images of Mr. Denham. His style of eloquence may be summed up in a single word, *force*—at nothing does he hesitate—he yields nothing—he concedes nothing—but rushes on with rapidity and strength, after the manner of a resistless torrent. He may not gratify the delicate taste of the fastidious scholar, but the mass of mankind are not fastidious scholars—and they can appreciate and understand him—not because he exalts them by his eloquence above the vulgar miseries of life, but because he touches those chords which nature has implanted in the hearts of all, and that in doing so, he appears to differ from his hearers in this alone, that he is more powerfully affected by their common feelings and their common sympathies.

From the impression I have of his capabilities, I apprehend, that if he succeeds in his designs upon Newark, and becomes a senator, he will not shine conspicuously in the House of Commons. The persons who compose that house are a mob, it is true, but a mob of somewhat a superior order, and moreover engaged in the consideration of topics foreign to the habits and employments of the mere *Nisi Prius* advocate. The failure of Messrs. O'Connell and Wallace, each of whom, in some respects, bear a strong resemblance to Sergeant Wilde, and the sickly reputation of Mr. North, testify beyond all controversy that to harangue mobs, make neat speeches, or wrangle about John Doe, and Richard Roe—and to discuss with statesmanlike abilities questions of vast national importance, are amazingly different things, requiring very different talents and attainments. The habits of the Sergeant are not congenial with those of his professional brethren—he mixes not amongst them—not even on circuit does he dine with them—Mrs. Wilde (till very lately) in the excess of her conjugal affection, or apprehensive the Sergeant might go astray, in her coach and four conducted him round the circuit, and with her, as became a dutiful spouse, he passed every leisure moment. He has no relish for the innocent pleasures of life—literary conversation has no charms for him—and horrible to relate, he despises a cheerful glass, and devotes even Saturday, a joyous day, among the generous, hospitable members of the English Bar, (and they are not a few) to references and consultations, supporting nature with a

mutton chop, and a cup of muddy coffee in chambers. I have said he will not be promoted in his profession—the Vice-Chancellor's decree, compelling him to restore the property of which, when an attorney he had spoliated an unfortunate client, and to restore it with costs, has left a brand upon his character, and placed, I hope, an insurmountable obstacle in his way to the Bench. The pure ermine of justice must not be sullied with so foul a contamination. What a contrast do pettifogging practices, like this, exhibit to the virtuous lives and spotless characters of Lord Tenterden and Chief Justice Tindall—and what a moral lesson may be drawn from such a circumstance, to deter mankind from the commission of fraudulent and selfish acts! An attorney commits a fraud, abandons his profession, becomes a lawyer: twenty years after, when he has risen to eminence, his fraud is dragged to light, publicly exposed, and his moral character for ever blasted. Knavery, even in this world, will assuredly meet with its punishment, and the punishment of Sergeant Wilde, will be *neglect*. Money he may make to his heart's desire, but a sense of what is due to public opinion, will restrain any ministry from elevating to the sacred office of a dispenser of justice one who has been guilty of injustice. A British Judge should be a man of erect and independent mind, of singleness of purpose, and integrity of heart: book-learning is not enough. The vast acquirements of a Sir Matthew Hale, place him high on the splendid catalogue of English Judges—history records his talents; but it is his unshaken love of justice, his fearless honesty which consecrates his name.

W

WHAT ELOQUENCE DOST THOU LOVE BEST?

What eloquence dost *thou* love best—
The lyre, the lamp, the tongue, the eye;
Which vary here our strange unrest,
By every shade of fear or joy?

The lyre disturbed by warrior fingers,
Rouses the passions into strife:
When beauty wakes the tone, it lingers
Around the gentler springs of life;
Soothes the hurt spirit's fitful sadness—
Exults in love or war's brief madness;
Giving to all a thrilling zest—
What eloquence dost *thou* love best?

The lamp to study pale has brought
The treasures of the ebbing past;
Whose hours are years of struggling thought—
But life on earth shall death outlast—
Whose mind, self-luminated, like a star,
Looks out to men and things afar,
By love of wondrous lore opprest—
What eloquence dost *thou* love best?

The tongue, persuasion's golden flood,
Gushing from depth of heart and brain,
Rolls o'er the ready multitude,
With turbid wave on wave amain;
And pealing shout, and glancing brand
Answer the tyrannous command,
And glorious praise from every breast—
What eloquence dost *thou* love best?